

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190023-1

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190023-1

CIA INTERNAL USE ONLY

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190023-1

SECRET

CIA / ONE / STAFF MEM / 40-61

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

26 July 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM 40-61 (Internal O/NE Working Paper - CIA
Distribution)

SUBJECT: The North Vietnamese "Offensive" in French-Speaking Africa

1. The Communist regime of North Viet Nam (DRV) has outfitted some major probing expeditions since the spring of 1960 in an effort to reconnoiter Africa's diplomatic and other terrain. We feel relatively certain the DRV has concluded that the French-speaking African nations offer a particularly inviting target for exchanges which could help to end North Viet Nam's pariah status in the non-Communist world.

2. Recent DRV exploratory probings indicate that North Viet Nam's immediate objective -- to secure recognition and diplomatic exchanges as expeditiously as possible -- may not be too difficult to attain. The French speaking areas offer a particularly inviting target in this respect since France itself maintains a diplomatic representative at Hanoi and

SECRET

CIA INTERNAL USE ONLY

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190023-1

SECRET

probably would not interpose strong objections against such exchanges. However, DRV Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem, who led a sizeable delegation to Africa in March-April 1961, met with rather indifferent success in his initial efforts to secure recognition. In addition to being received in but a handful of former French African states, Foreign Minister Ung managed to extract a promise of diplomatic exchanges only from Morocco and a rather indefinite expression of interest from Tunisia.

3. For the present, the greatest potential for DRV influence -- however limited -- is confined to Guinea and Mali, where North Viet Nam already maintains small diplomatic missions. The leaders of both nations have disagreed violently with France in the recent past and have proved highly receptive to aid offers and other connections with the Communist Bloc. The DRV concluded several cultural and trade payments agreements with Guinea earlier this year, as well as a cultural arrangement with Mali promising the latter needed teachers, lawyers, and doctors. However, the ability of North Viet Nam to make any meaningful contribution to these two African states is quite restricted. After a well publicized visit to the DRV by Sekou Toure in 1960 and the existence of diplomatic ties for more than a year, the DRV

- 2 -

SECRET

SECRET

Embassy at Conakry consists of only three officials who have not proved very accessible to the Guineans. Moreover, Guinean President Sekou Toure, as well as Modibo Keita of Mali, are quite aware of the limited resources of North Viet Nam and almost certainly look directly to Moscow, Prague, and other major Bloc suppliers when in quest of Communist assistance.

4. Despite these negligible beginnings, the DRV probably will have more success in the not too distant future in securing acceptance and recognition among not only French-speaking, but other newly independent African states as well. The DRV makes no protest against concurrent recognition of South Viet Nam, and present indications are that Saigon has become reconciled to the inevitability of sharing diplomatic honors with Ho Chi Minh in Africa. For their part, the bulk of conservative African leaders, under mounting pressure by local radical nationalists to adopt neutralist foreign policies, will find recognition of the DRV an attractive means of demonstrating their neutrality in the Cold War.

5. In any sweeping competition with Communist China for influence in Africa, the DRV is almost certain to come out second best, even with Soviet Union backing. While its French language

- 3 -

SECRET

INTERNAL USE ONLY
SECRET

utilization would be a measurable asset, the DRV has only limited capabilities for extending economic, technical, cultural, or other types of assistance to former French controlled African states. Moreover, while North Viet Nam can trade on its reputation as the champion of anti-French colonialism in Asia, most of the erstwhile French African territories maintain relatively harmonious relations with France and do not feel themselves in need of identification with the DRV. Thus, North Viet Nam has only one major commodity it can export to Africa -- its experience and willingness to train militant nationalists in the refined arts of subversion and guerrilla warfare. With the possible exception of the Algerian Government-in-exile, there are no indications that any of the new African governments is particularly anxious to avail itself of this type of foreign aid at this time.

25X1

SECRET

INTERNAL USE ONLY

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190023-1

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190023-1